

## 2008 Weather Summary

January 2008 did not continue the snowy conditions from December 2007 and, as a result, precipitation finished below average for the month. There were a few storms of note, one of which was a blizzard that struck southern Minnesota on January 29. February also saw meager snow over most of the state. The far southeast was an exception, where better than a foot of snow fell. March was yet another dry month, with a lack of snow and an occasional flirt with mild temperatures.

Any worries of a dry spring (or not seeing any more snow for the season) were quickly put to rest in April. With the exception of far northwestern Minnesota, most communities reported significant rain or snowfall totals in April. Precipitation totals in northeast, east central, and southeastern Minnesota counties topped five inches for the month. In a few cases, the monthly precipitation totals were record setting with a few southeastern Minnesota spots seeing seven inches or more.

May started out on the wet side, but became dry for the second half of the month. The statewide average rainfall wound up nearly normal for the month. June precipitation was hit or miss across the state, with numerous rounds of severe weather and heavy rainfall. Two notable flash flood events occurred in southeast Minnesota, one on June 7-9, and another on June 11-12. For the third summer in a row, there was a prolonged summertime dry spell in the state. For the ten-week period during the last two weeks of June and into late August, many Minnesota communities received less than four inches of rainfall. This came at a time of year when rainfall rates average roughly one inch per week. Thus, rainfall deficits over the ten-week dry spell topped four inches in many areas. Described another way, ten-week rainfall totals were less than 50 percent of normal for the period. When compared with the same ten-week time span in previous years, the 2008 growing season rainfall ranked below the 5th percentile (one year in twenty) in many locales.

There were some beneficial rains in late August that took the edge off the drought over eastern Minnesota. Nonetheless, through the end of September, a large swath of southern Minnesota was in a moderate drought, as well as the Mississippi headwaters and parts of northeast Minnesota. The drought persisted over east central and southeast Minnesota during the fall of 2008, as well as parts of north central and northeast Minnesota. There were autumn rains, the heaviest of which fell over western and northern Minnesota. In fact, Wilkin to Marshall counties along the North Dakota border had near record precipitation from September to November. There was drought relief in parts of north central Minnesota in September where four or more inches of rain fell.

The winter of 2008-09 started out with a string of snowstorms in December, with many places in the state winding up with twice the monthly average for snowfall. There was plenty of cold to go around too in December, assuring a "White Christmas" for all. Nevertheless, a stubborn drought persisted in east central and southeast Minnesota and would continue into 2009.

Source: State Climatology Office, Minnesota DNR Division of Water

